



Volume 20, No. 12

for the week ending May 15, 2009

**House Committee Delays Vote on Charter School Expansion Bill
Drains Funds from LEAs --- CONTACTS NEEDED IMMEDIATELY!**

On May 13, the House Education Committee voted -- by a one-vote margin -- to delay for one week a vote on **HB 2146** -- legislation which greatly expands eligibility to attend charter schools. The vote on the bill is almost certain to be on **Wednesday, May 20** -- the committee will meet at 11:00 a.m.

HB 2146, as amended, would make all "free and reduced lunch" students in the twelve largest school systems by Average Daily Membership (ADM) eligible to attend charter schools. **The number of free and reduced lunch students in these twelve systems is approximately 241,000 students!** In systems such as Memphis and Nashville where the free and reduced lunch student population ranges from 70-80%, passage of this legislation basically amounts to "open enrollment" for charter schools. **The chart below lists the school systems by total ADM which would be affected by this bill.** This list includes four systems, Tipton, Sullivan, Maury, and Blount Counties -- while not yet at the 12,000 student threshold -- are very close and could be affected very soon. The four columns in the chart below represent: the system name, the total number of students by ADM, the number of free and reduced lunch program students by ADM, and the percentage of free and reduced lunch students in the system. This data was provided to legislators by the Tennessee Department of Education.

LEA	*Total ADM	**F&RPL ADM	**F&RPL %
Memphis City	107,278	78,036	79.6
Davidson County	72,321	50,861	72.8
Knox County	55,197	21,917	42.8
Shelby County	47,165	13,542	30.1
Hamilton County	40,258	21,664	56.1
Rutherford County	36,568	12,000	35.2
Williamson County	29,803	2,550	9.3
Clarksville/Montgomery County	28,474	12,121	44.2
Sumner County	26,551	8,541	34.1
Wilson County	14,711	3,316	24.5
Sevier County	14,264	7,357	55.6
Jackson/Madison County	13,137	9,361	71.2
Tipton County	11,825	5,956	52.7
Sullivan County	11,650	5,429	47.6
Maury County	11,512	5,726	51.5
Blount County	11,434	5,133	47.3

*Spring Estimate, 2009

**2008 Report Card

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The **MESSAGE** against **HB 2146** should be:

- ◆ This bill is a fundamental change from the 2002 charter school law which focuses on “high priority” (under-achieving) schools and students.
- ◆ Charter schools are still relatively unproven and should not be given a virtual “blank check” with the greatly expanded enrollment eligibility.
- ◆ Charter schools represent a tremendous “drain” on the financial resources of regular public schools. Funding follows the child, and since students do not leave in blocks of twenty, the expenses for the regular school (teachers, utilities, transportation, etc.) remain the same. It is possible that a proliferation of charter schools could cause such a drain on school budgets that **a local tax increase may be required to replace funds lost to charter schools!**

The vote on this legislation will be **very close**. TEA members are asked to contact the House Education Committee IMMEDIATELY and ask that they vote “**NO**” on **HB 2146**. Contact information for the House Education Committee is listed below.

House Education			
LP = Legislative Plaza		WMB = War Memorial Building	
Address for all members is Nashville, TN 37243			
All legislators may be reached by telephone at 1-800-449-8366.			
You must then enter the last five digits of their office phone number.			
Member (Party & District)	Office	Phone Area Code (615)	E-Mail Address (Please include your name, postal address, and phone number in your e-mail.
Chairman Harry Brooks (R-19)	117 WMB	741-6879	rep.harry.brooks@capitol.tn.gov
Vice Chairman Les Wittingham (D-38)	36 LP	741-6852	rep.leslie.wittingham@capitol.tn.gov
Secretary Jim Coley (R-97)	207 WMB	741-8201	rep.jim.coley@capitol.tn.gov
Judy Barker (D-77)	24 LP	741-0718	rep.judy.barker@capitol.tn.gov
Kevin Brooks (R-24)	104 WMB	741-1350	rep.kevin.brooks@capitol.tn.gov
Tommie F. Brown (D-28)	36 LP	741-4374	rep.tommie.brown@capitol.tn.gov
Barbara Cooper (D-86)	38 LP	741-4295	rep.barbara.cooper@capitol.tn.gov
John J. Deberry, Jr. (D-90)	26 LP	741-2239	rep.john.deberry@capitol.tn.gov
Bill Dunn (R-16)	110 WMB	741-1721	rep.bill.dunn@capitol.tn.gov
Beth Harwell (R-56)	107 WMB	741-0709	rep.beth.harwell@capitol.tn.gov
David Hawk (R-5)	219 WMB	741-7482	rep.david.hawk@capitol.tn.gov
Ryan A Haynes (R-14)	214 WMB	741-2264	rep.ryan.haynes@capitol.tn.gov
Joey Hensley (R-70)	106 WMB	741-7476	rep.joey.hensley@capitol.tn.gov
Matthew Hill (R-7)	107 WMB	741-2251	rep.matthew.hill@capitol.tn.gov
Ulysses Jones, Jr. (D-98)	35 LP	741-4575	rep.ulysses.jones@capitol.tn.gov
Ron Lollar (R-99)	209 WMB	741-7084	rep.ron.lollar@capitol.tn.gov
Mark L. Maddox (D-76)	17 LP	741-7847	rep.mark.maddox@capitol.tn.gov
Joe Pitts (D-67)	109 WMB	741-2043	rep.joe.pitts@capitol.tn.gov
Joe Towns Jr. (D-84)	36 LP	741-2189	rep.joe.towns@capitol.tn.gov
Larry Turner (D-85)	208 WMB	741-6954	rep.larry.turner@capitol.tn.gov
Terri Lynn Weaver (R-40)	204 WMB	741-2192	rep.terri.lynn.weaver@capitol.tn.gov
John Mark Windle (D-41)	108 WMB	741-1260	rep.john.windle@capitol.tn.gov

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TEA Asks Governor to Veto Home School Legislation Diploma Would Equal Those Earned in Regular Schools

TEA President Earl Wiman has asked Governor Phil Bredesen to veto **SB 433/HB 431** which would give equal weight to home school diplomas for purposes of employment in state or local government. The concept conflicts with efforts to increase the rigor for high school graduates in public schools. Because of the importance of this issue, this Report is carrying a copy of the letter sent by President Wiman to the Governor. The letter clearly outlines TEA's objections to this legislation which has already passed both houses of the General Assembly.

May 11, 2009

*The Honorable Phil Bredesen
Governor of Tennessee
State Capitol
Nashville, Tennessee 37243*

Dear Governor Bredesen:

As president of the Tennessee Education Association, I am writing to express our members' concerns regarding the state's acceptance of home school diplomas. As amended, HB 431/SB 433 states that a home school diploma "shall be considered by all departments, agencies, commissions, and other such entities of state and local government as having all the rights and privileges of a high school diploma awarded by a public school system."

I know that you have been a leader in advocating the re-design of high school curriculum in our public schools, and that you strongly support the National Governor's Association's efforts to increase the number of state participants in the American Diploma Project (ADP). As you know, the American Diploma Project's goals involve enhancing the high school curriculum to increase rigor and accountability in order to ensure that a high school diploma has real meaning. The ADP network states have all committed to four policy actions which include:

- *Aligning high school standards and assessments with the knowledge and skills required for success after high school.*
- *Requiring all high school graduates to take challenging courses that actually prepare them for life after high school.*
- *Streamlining the assessment system so that the tests students take in high school also can serve as readiness tests for college and work.*
- *Holding high schools accountable for graduating students who are ready for college or careers, and holding postsecondary institutions accountable for students' success once enrolled.*

The home school diploma legislation which will soon be sent to you for your consideration is diametrically opposed to the high standards and accountability reflected in Tennessee's movement to enhance rigor and standards reflected in the ADP. While the state has virtually no control over the curriculum, teaching methods, instructional time, or testing requirements for home schools, this legislation is mandating state and local governments to accept home school diplomas on their "face value." The legislation requires the state to basically assume that home schoolers have met some un-defined standard which should merit their acceptance.

In view of your concerns around enhanced standards for Tennessee high school graduates, TEA would like to ask that you use your power to veto HB 431/SB 433 and send it back to the General Assembly for further consideration. Home schoolers should not have the freedom from government requirements on one hand, yet be given total acceptance by government agencies of ill-defined standards for a home-school diploma on the other. Thank you for your consideration.

*Sincerely,
/s/ Earl H Wiman, Ed.D
President*

[Visit TEA's Legislative Action Center \(LAC\) for updates.](#)

Attack on Negotiations Law Delayed to 2010 **Would Pull Principals Out of Negotiations Unit**

Last week's printed Report contains a list of TEA-opposed bills which have been delayed until next year. While no bill is completely "dead" until the legislature adjourns, TEA lobbyists are confident that the bill to pull principals out of the bargaining unit will not be voted on in the 2009 session and should be added to the list contained in last week's report. Below is a description of the legislation. Delaying this bill is a **BIG WIN** for TEA's lobbying efforts.

- **BARGAINING UNIT – HB 1506/SB 246** -- Prohibits principals under performance contracts from being members of negotiating units for collective bargaining purposes. Amends TCA, Section 49-5-602(7)

Due to the fact that many schools will be closing soon for summer break, next week's Report (for the week ending May 22) will be the final printed TEA Legislative Report for this school year. Since the General Assembly will be in session for the next two to three weeks, **TEA members can continue to be informed by joining TEA's Grass Roots Education Action Team (G-R-E-A-T Team)**. As long as the legislature is in session, members of the G-R-E-A-T Team will receive electronic updates on legislative activities. To join the G-R-E-A-T Team send a request -- giving your HOME e-mail address -- to GreatTeam @tea.nea.org. Please include your first and last name and local association. This service is available to **TEA MEMBERS ONLY**, and you must provide us with your HOME -- not work -- e-mail address.